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**HB 5272 AN ACT CREATING A RELIEF FUND FOR CONNECTICUT DAIRY FARMERS
AND
HB 5483 AN ACT CONCERNING FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR THE DAIRY INDUSTRY
AND
HB 5504 AN ACT INCREASING THE DAIRY RETAIL LICENSING FEE**

Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy and members of the Environment Committee, Central Connecticut Cooperative Farmers Association would like to take this opportunity to provide testimony for HB 5272, HB 4383 and against HB 5504.

The Co-op was established in 1938, and for 70 years now has been the only farmer owned and operated feed mill in Connecticut. We have grown significantly over the years, and currently service over 1500 patrons and members. We offer a full line of feeds and commodities for all types of livestock while also providing free nutritional and management consulting including custom feed programs for all species.

Again this year we are providing testimony and support for our dairy producers in Connecticut. Unfortunately since a relief/support mechanism has yet to get established to stabilize the dairy industry, we are supporting the fewest number of dairy farmers in the state's history.

With record high production costs and sub par incomes, these farms are at the greatest risk ever. Most local farms have grown as much as land bases' will allow, implementing strategies to continue to become more efficient and still can not make ends meet.

These dairies play an integral role in making the Co-op work. The number of farms may be smaller but the tonnage that they purchase helps us maintain our ability to service our 1500 patron/members with a fresh, quality local product.

With regard to Retail Lic. Feed Bill 5504, we do agree that license fees need to change but would prefer to see it done on a per unit basis across the board, i.e. .035/gallon.

In these hard economic times we realize funding is hard to find but when this industry is lost in Connecticut it will be lost forever.

Donald Domina, General Manager
And the Board of Directors
Central Connecticut Cooperative Farmers Association